

The use of Wine by Biblical Characters.

If it is still persisted that wine of an intoxicating nature was used by some of the most prominent characters of the Bible, we have only to glance at its effects to see the absurdity of making such a course an example to be followed. It will be noticed that its effects were only evil, whenever any effects were recorded.

Noah's Drunkenness.

Gen. ix. 20, 21—"And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard; and he drank of the wine and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent." This is the very first mention that is made of wine in the bible, and its effects upon Noah shows that it was intoxicating. It dethroned his mental powers to such an extent that he lost all sense of propriety, and fell into a state of indecent exposure in his tent during his insensibility. This unfortunate occurrence also became the occasion of national misfortune to one line of his descendants, through the disrespect of one of his sons. There is no doubt but the first effects of the wine was exhilarating, calling out the vital nervous energies to expel it, he was deceived into the belief that it afforded some special advantage which ordinary food did not afford; but, that it also "blunted" the finer sensibilities of his nature, which should always be acute and active, is also quite apparent. In this instance there is certainly, nothing to recommend the use of intoxicating wine.

Lot's Shame.

This is the next undisputed mention of wine, which is in Gen. xix. 34, 36—"In this instance the wine was doubtless of the kind called "mixed wine," which possessed most powerfully intoxicating properties." The effects here does not recommend the use of intoxicating wine.

Nadab and Abihue.

Aaron's two sons, while under the influence of intoxicating drink, disobeyed the express command of the Almighty by offering strange fire upon the altar. In consequence of this daring act of disobedience they were suddenly smitten with death by the hand of the Lord, who evidently designed by this summary act of justice to render them an example to succeeding generations. This is a most striking illustration of the influence of Alcohol to debase the spiritual feelings, and, also, of God's displeasure towards those who are entrusted with spiritual duties, and who place themselves under its baneful influence. Physiological facts inevitably point to the conclusion that its indulgence to any extent whatever disturbs the superior portion of the brain, which is devoted to a recognition of moral and spiritual interests, by exciting the base, which is that portion that relates us to a physical existence, and the passionial influences. It certainly will not be argued in any of these cases that the use of "intoxicating" wine was beneficial?

The Total Abstainers of the Bible.

Let us now inquire into the dealings of God with those who discarded the use of wine. While there is no evidence in the Bible that the use of "intoxicating" wine ever did, or ever could, do any one the slightest possible good, we have the illustrious example of some of the most eminent biblical characters as total abstainers.

The Israelites.

During the sojourn of the children of Israel in Egypt, they were undoubtedly total abstainers, since their masters, the Egyptians, at that time made no use of any fermented liquors. And during their sojourn in the wilderness they were of necessity abstainers; their only drink being the purest water from the "rock." To this long discipline of temperance might be largely attributed that hardihood and fortitude coupled with bravery, which enabled them to sweep out with astonishing rapidity the enervated nations of Palestine, who had wasted their energies by intemperance and riotous living; and were thus easily vanquished, though protected by strong walls and fortresses.

The Nazarites.

At the time of the establishment of the ceremonial law, there was also established an Association of total abstainers, which were called Nazarites. They dedicated themselves, wholly, to the service of God; and one of the conditions of dedication was the total abstinence from the use of wine. To insure a perfect observance of the pledge all wine was prohibited whether fermented or not. Many of the finest personages of the Bible were members of this class or order. And it is most probable that Daniel and his three Hebrew brethren were Nazarites, as they refused to drink the King's wine, preferring pulse and water.